An ecosystemic approach to public policies, research and teaching programmes is posited, encompassing the different dimensions of being in the world: intimate, interactive, social and biophysical. New paradigms of development, growth, power, wealth, work and freedom are considered. In the socio-cultural learning niches, heuristic-hermeneutic experiences unveil the dynamic and complex configurations that originate the problems of difficult settlement or solution in our time.

Keywords: education, culture, politics, economics, ethics, environment

1. Introduction

Public policies, research and teaching programmes should define (and deal with) the problems of difficult settlement or solution in our time in view of the dynamic configurations formed by the different dimensions of being-in-the-world (intimate, interactive, social and biophysical), as they combine, as donors and recipients, to elicit the events (deficits/assets), cope with the consequences (desirable/undesirable) and organise for change (potential outputs).

Instead of being trapped into the path-dependency of pre-established problem-definitions and dealing with segmented, reduced issues (trying to solve isolated problems without addressing the general phenomenon), problems should be defined and dealt with deep inside the “boiling pot”, where they emerge, in view of the paradigms of development, growth, power, wealth, work and freedom embedded into the cultural, political and economic institutions.

It means construct the social meanings of technologies, create new forms of individual and collective identities, produce more of the things that people need (food, shelter, clothing, education, security, health care) and less of the costly things they do not (luxury products, military hardware, pollution, traffic jams, useless chattels and overspread criminality), in view of the dynamics of the systems (institutions, populations, political, economic, cultural and ecological background).

Beyond the anthropogenic views, that do not distinguish between the whole of the human beings and the destructive action on nature and culture of the political-economic establishment (governments and business corporations), we should consider the power asymmetries, that confer to a small and privileged part of the world population the decisions about the destiny of the entire mankind, accommodating people to the prevailing order instead of preparing them to change the status quo.
2. Material and Methods

In the socio-cultural learning niches, heuristic-hermeneutic processes unveil and work with the dynamic and complex configurations that originate the problems (the general phenomenon), encompassing the alien that we strive to understand and the familiar that we take for granted.

It implies the creation of a new “semiosphere”, the entanglement of subjective and objective realities, an “excess of meaning”, that encompasses the alien that we strive to understand and the familiar that we take for granted, as a condition to create new forms of being-in-the-world.

Individual and collective projects of life are unveiled and dealt with by heuristic-hermeneutic experiences; intermediary objects (curious things, images depicting everyday life), are presented to the participants to generate awareness, interpretation and understanding beyond established stereotypes.

Epistemic analysis reveal subject-object relationships (“how” problems are defined), thematic analysis considers the emphasis and inclusiveness given to the different dimensions (“what” is at stake), pragmatic analysis refers to the practical consequences of the actions taken (adopted strategies).

Epistemic analysis may reveal appropriation (alteration of cognitive, affective and conative processes), as well as dogmatism, compliance to pre-stablished beliefs, stereotyped preconceptions, reduction to logical categories and frozen schemes of thought, reliance on exterior authority to qualify own experience.

Thematic analysis account for values, feelings, beliefs, commitments (intimate dimension); allegiances, solidarity, partnerships, leadership (interactive dimension); public policies, citizenship, advocacy, mass-media (social dimension); vital needs, environment, territory, artifacts (biophysical dimension).

3. Results and Discussion

The objective is not to solve taken for granted problems, but to unveil and work with the dynamic and complex configurations that originate them, instead of being trapped into the path-dependency of pre-established problem-defininitions.

As a process of exploration, inquiry, and discovery, it implies many changes, transformations, reconsiderations, revisions, and significant expansions in concepts and ideas – rather than a recording or a re-presentation of an already established and finalized position.

In view of the epistemological and ontological dimensions of the process, teaching for meaning counteracts the present cultural context that values only information transmission; to salvage the realm of character and moral development, ethos is centered on the global common good.

New paradigms of development, growth, power, wealth, work and freedom should be embedded at institutional level, including heterogeneous attributes, behaviours and interactions and the dynamics of the systems (institutions, populations, political, economic, cultural and ecological background).
Instead of dealing with the bubbles (segmented, reduced issues) and trying to solve isolated and localized problems without addressing the general phenomenon, the proposal emphasizes the definition of the problems deep inside the “boiling pot”, where the problems emerge.

4. Conclusions

As a result of the proposal it is expected that public policies, research and teaching programmes would:

1) define the problems in the core of the “boiling pot” in view of a holistic, ecosystemic framework, instead of reducing them to the bubbles of the surface (effects, fragmented, taken for granted issues);

2) combine the four dimensions of being in the world (intimate, interactive, social and biophysical) in the diagnosis and prognosis of the events, assessing their deficits and assets, as donors and recipients;

3) promote the singularity of (identity, proper characteristics) and the reciprocity (mutual support) between all dimensions of being in the world in view of their complementarity and dynamic equilibrium;

4) contribute for the transition to an ecosystemic model of culture, in order to deal with the problems of difficult settlement or solution in the world, as an essential condition for consistency, effectiveness and endurance.

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